

# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

FOUNDED, 1916

VOL. XII

FEBRUARY, 1927

NO. 2

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Homer Croy On What the Public Wants.....	<i>Reported by J. Willard Ridings</i> 5
The Brute!.....	<i>By Mary Carolyn Davies</i> 6
Scrollsaw Suspense.....	<i>By Edwin Hunt Hoover</i> 7
The Kindest Cut of All.....	<i>By C. W. Callahan</i> 9
Pitfalls of Mystery-Story Writing.....	<i>By Rebecca N. Porter</i> 10
A Secret of Trade-Paper Writing.....	<i>By Frank H. Williams</i> 12
You Never Can Tell!.....	<i>By Leslie E. Dunkin</i> 14
Trade, Technical and Class Journal Department.....	<i>John T. Bartlett, Editor</i> 15
Literary Market Tips.....	21
The S. T. C. News.....	24
Prize Contests.....	25

WILLARD E. HAWKINS, *Editor*

EDWIN HUNT HOOVER

THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL

DAVID RAFFELOCK

*Associates*

Published monthly at 1839 Champa Street, Denver, Colorado. Terms, \$2.00 a year in advance; 20 cents a copy. Canadian subscriptions, \$2.25 a year. Foreign subscriptions, \$2.50 a year. Stamps, coins, money order, or check acceptable. Three-year subscriptions, \$5.00; Canadian and foreign, \$6.00. Figures on wrapper show date to which subscription is paid. Act promptly in renewing or reporting change of address. Magazine will be discontinued at expiration of subscription period, unless renewal is specifically ordered. Advertising Rates: Per page, \$50.00 per insertion; half page, \$25.00; quarter page (4 inches), \$12.50; smaller space, \$3.50 per inch (preferred positions extra). Contributions of superior interest to writers will be considered and offer made if acceptable. Stamped envelope for return if unavailable should be inclosed. Entered as second-class matter, April 21, 1916, at the Post Office at Denver, Colorado, under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1927, by The Author & Journalist.

We HAVE OCCASIONALLY TOUCHED upon concerns that announce a market for literary material through the writers' magazines when no such market exists. Usually the motive back of such an announcement is to secure clients for criticism, revising, typing or other service, for which fees are charged.

It is perfectly legitimate to offer such service. The unethical part consists in employing an advertising subterfuge. And whenever we discover that such an imposition is being practiced, it is our custom to issue a warning.

Our zeal in this direction apparently led to doing an injustice to the Hoffman-Maxwell Play Company of San Francisco. In our December issue we published an item to the effect that this company, in response to a statement of its needs published in another magazine for writers, sent to a contributor a letter revealing that instead of offering a market, it charged a reading and criti-

cism fee for reviewing manuscripts submitted in response to the call.

A letter from Mrs. Virginia Maxwell, outlining the work of the Hoffman-Maxwell Play Company, and accompanied by proofs, shows convincingly that this concern is engaged in legitimate play brokerage business, and that it apparently offers a real opportunity for playwrights. Mrs. Maxwell says, in part:

"We, as playbrokers, undoubtedly offer the unknown playwright (we so designate any author not having secured a New York production for one of his plays) the most extensive and lucrative market tendered him today, provided he writes plays suitable for our market while he is waiting for Broadway recognition. We—Ted and Virginia Maxwell—have never had a play produced in New York, yet our financial independence comes from writing plays for this particular market. Our market evidently is one unknown to you, and

yet it is a most interesting, lucrative field. There are articles about writing plays for New York, yes, where the market is daily flooded. With our market the supply has not surpassed, nor do we believe it ever will surpass, the demand. We cannot write plays fast enough to satisfy this demand; we have only five new ones for this Spring, where we could place many more; so we have written our book, "Play Technique," telling the writer just what is required. Naturally, we charge a reading fee. We have worked mighty hard to secure the knowledge that we have; why should we give it away? If we gratuitously criticised every manuscript we received, we would have no time for anything else.

"The Hoffman-Maxwell Play Company has been established almost ten years. Last May I took complete management of the company. Previous to that Mr. Hoffman had solicited manuscripts through the writers' magazines. Before taking over the management I requested him to withdraw this item, and any magazine that has since run it has done so without my authorization. As soon as I assumed control I put our play-reading department on a self-supporting basis. Our policy has been to discourage writers who in our opinion were not qualified to write anything.

"We lease plays by various writers to the one-a-week, two-a-week, and three-a-week stock companies, musical comedy companies, and to the traveling repertoire companies playing throughout the United States, her territories, and Canada. Some of these companies lease exclusively through the Hoffman-Maxwell Play Company. Our amateur activities cover the same field."

Mrs. Maxwell lists a number of producing companies that are using plays written by herself and husband, or plays by other authors placed through their brokerage agency. For further details of their service and connections, readers interested in this field are referred to the advertisement elsewhere in this issue.

APROPOS of our December comment on Poe's apparent blunder in "The Raven" in having the lamp-light cast a shadow of the raven on the floor, although the raven sat on a bust over the door, Brainard Cooper of Orlando, Fla., offers this ingenious explanation:

"Colonial homes, such as Poe certainly was familiar with in his youth in Virginia, have ceilings, usually, of great height. Chambers are entered through doors which are not infrequently transomed. And even before the era of electricity such homes had swinging lamps suspended from the ceilings. Is it not quite possible, therefore, that such a lamp could have cast its rays through a transom to throw the shadow of the bird perched 'just above my chamber door' onto the floor of the room in which the poet was supposed to have been doing his pondering?

"Granting the obvious possibility, I think it even more probable that Poe had this very condition in

mind than that he, master of exact composition, should have made an error so inexcusable. When we see Homer nod let us look closely to ascertain if it is not merely a shadow flitting across his exalted head."

WHERE DO THE ILLITERATE and extravagantly advertised concerns that announce service of various kinds for writers secure their clients? Evidently they "get by" in some manner, because their literature is flooding the country. Much of it recently has emanated from Chicago, all looking as if it were printed in the same plant, and characterized by the same lofty disregard for grammar, spelling, and actual publishing conditions. We have quoted from several recently. Here are a few entertaining morsels from a booklet issued by The Chicago Producers, 160 N. La Salle Street, Chicago.

When a writer starts in the writing game, they usually commence the same way. \* \* \* We call it a game, just as every profession is called a "game," for everyone entered in it are the players, and someone is bound to lose.

The beginner, and even those who have sold a few manuscripts have been "stung" to the extent of a few dollars by the so-called "agent" who will revise and place your manuscripts on the market for a certain sum. \* \* \* There has been hundreds and perhaps we can safely say thousands who have been "humblebugged" by this class of agents, and when a reliable agent finally comes along and offers their reliable services, the writer who has been "stung" usually says, "No thanks, I've been stung before." Can you blame these writers? NO! They have only dealt with the crooked class of agents and get the idea that everyone of them are the same.

There are many of the well-known writers today who know The Chicago Producers as the concern that gave them their first start. Then there are others, who have not reached the peak of success yet, who know what The Chicago Producers are doing for beginners who have shown the proper ideas, and have shown they can work up these ideas. To those who are not acquainted with the Chicago Producers, we will give an outline of the services which we render to those only, who show they possess good ideas, and no one else.

Not half, or we can safely say, three-fourths of the publishers today do not even read one page of your manuscript.

We guarantee to place every manuscript we find acceptable for placing, within 60 days at the very most. \* \* \* We are liberally paid for each manuscript we place with them, from the publisher.

Our rates for revising are based fairly. We charge from one-fifth to one-tenth the full value of the manuscript, for we can tell the value of a manuscript after its first reading.

It is queer. Some manuscripts can be typed perfectly and appear in all respects to be of value, and are unsaleable to the smallest type of publisher, while others can be written in pencil and in terrible shape, and sometimes are found to possess an idea that has never been found in any manuscript before.

If your manuscript is accepted, it means we have a call for such a piece of work, and is acceptable to that call.

THE COPYRIGHT OFFICE has aroused a good deal of discussion as the result of a recent ruling of Thorwald Solberg, register of copyrights, that married women should register copyright of material under their husbands' names. The copyright code does not specify under what name a claim of copyright shall be made. Register Solberg's contention is that there is an advantage to the married-woman author in having her claim registered and indexed under the married name, as this will make the claim easier to trace and more accurate in detail.

# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

February, 1927



## Homer Croy on What the Public Wants

REPORTED BY J. WILLARD RIDINGS



HOMER CROY

"AFTER fumbling and feeling around all my life, trying to find exactly what people are interested in, I have resolved this interest into five things. And I believe that every normal human being is interested in all of them. We are so constituted that we cannot escape them," says Homer Croy, Missouri novelist, whose latest book, "They Had to See Paris," is fast gaining ground as a popular seller, following his "West of the Water Tower."

"If we writers put them into our work we will have a public; and they are the things I try to put into my novels. When I evolve a story based on one or more of these things, then I feel on safe ground.

"The first is sex, and by sex I don't mean a car parked along a country road, or a hip flask at a flapper dance, but the bigger, finer, deep interpretation of the moving interest between men and women, the biological urge that keeps the race going. Sex, as we use it today, has fallen into meaning something smoky and discolored. I don't mean that. I mean motherhood as well as moonlight.

"I have never written a novel which, sooner or later, didn't get down to that, and no novel of consequence can skirt it. If a newspaper came out without that element

in it, it would be about as interesting as a bill of sale tacked to a telephone pole.

"Second, money. Everyone in the world is interested in money, or some expression of it. Property is another name for it. We fight for it, die for it, murder for it. The front page of any newspaper is generally a monograph on money. A motor car is money turned into wheels and driving gear and gasoline. A story about Wall Street, or breaking the bank at Monte Carlo, or coming out on top in Florida, is a money story.

"Third—I wish I had a handy word to explain what I mean. The word Religion comes nearest to it, but I mean more than churches and pews and collection plates. I mean something that has persisted from the cave man worshiping the sun, right up to the biggest church in America today. A better phrase is the Great Outside. This interests the atheist just as much as it does the Sunday school superintendent. We all want to know what is coming After. Is the grave the end, or the beginning? It is something that nobody knows, and it is something that everybody wants to know. This fundamental human interest comes out in such things as Conan Doyle with his spiritualism, which I don't believe in at all, and in the Hindu fanatics I have seen who stand on one foot for thirty years. People fill mosques and cathedrals and Sunday schools, all to feed that deep yearning in mankind for a desire to know about the Hereafter. Any story that is rooted in this has a fundamental appeal that no one can escape.

"Fourth, Body. We have to eat. We have

## THE AUTHOR &amp; JOURNALIST

to have clothes. We have to have a roof over our heads. It is the practical, everyday matter of taking care of ourselves. It is health; it is hospitals and doctors; it is 'What are we going to do about the baby's tonsils?' Dickens reveled in the Body. He is always describing what people eat; in every one of his novels there is a cook book cut up and strewed along the way. And people like to read about it, what somebody eats. There was Russell Sage with one apple for lunch, Clemenceau with his onion soup, and so on. And I guess any woman would just as soon be dead as to be out of fashion. And that, roughly, is what I mean by the Body.

"Fifth, the Underdog—the struggle of the one against the many. It is something that no one can get away from. It may mean the man against enemies, or the man against fate or nature. An example of the former is Victor Hugo's 'Les Miserables'—Jean Valjean against police and society, a worthy man with whom we sympathize, and who is faced by his ancient enemies. An example of man faced by nature is Robinson Crusoe. Into this category falls each victim of untoward circumstances—he is one against many. It explains the great interest in the Gerald Chapman case. People can't help sympathizing with the underdog. If there ever was a criminal in this world who needed disposing of, it was this Chapman, but it cost the state \$200,000 to give him what he deserved. It is because of that deep tendency in human nature to sympathize with the underdog. Nobody can escape this feeling. Sometimes it works good when it becomes a matter of public interest, and sometimes it works bad. It is the spirit which made people fight and work and dig

in the Kentucky cave for Floyd Collins. Politicians capitalize it. If a politician can get the feeling broadcast that he is being picked on by powerful enemies, why then people rush to the polls to defend him. If you put that same element into a short-story, into a novel, or a news dispatch, then you've got something in which everybody is interested.

"Those are the five big, fundamental interests. There are smaller ones—for instance, muscle. People—speaking always of great masses—like prize fights, baseball, football and so on. This interest is growing in America. More space is devoted to the sports sections of the newspapers than ever before. It made Babe Ruth a hero and Red Grange a millionaire.

"Another smaller thing in which people are interested is the myth spirit—of people doing great and wonderful God-like things. It is this myth feeling—splendid, heroic man battling with the gods—that we find in Homeric legends—that we find in the wonderful, impeccable heroes of today. Those splendid people don't resemble anybody I know, but they constantly appear in novels and fiction. Zane Grey makes a hundred thousand dollars a year translating the man-myths of Greece into the terms of cowboys and cactus. If he had lived in Greece he would have written epic poems about somebody wrestling with thunder and lightning. There's more money now in cowboys.

"In addition there is the smaller thing of wanting to know how a story comes out, if the Hero is going to get the Pretty Girl, and if the thief is going to be caught, and so on. Also there is humor, characterization, clever phrasing and so on, but the universal fundamental appeals are the five I have mentioned."



## THE BRUTE!

BY MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

I knew not how callous and cruel men can be,  
Till I met and was loved by and loved blue-eyed Jim.  
He wanted to read all his stories to me,  
When I wanted to read all my poems to him!

Collins.  
ician can  
is being  
why then  
him. If  
a short-  
tch, then  
rybody is

ental in-  
—for in-  
lways of  
baseball,  
growing  
d to the  
han ever  
and Red

in people  
f people  
e things.  
roic man  
find in  
he won-

Those  
ybody I  
n novels  
hundred  
he man-  
cowboys  
reece he  
it some-  
ghtning.  
s.

thing of  
s out, if  
Girl, and  
d so on.  
n, clever  
l funda-  
e men-



EDWIN H. HOOVER

## Scrollsaw Suspense

BY EDWIN HUNT HOOVER

WHAT is suspense? A man—or woman—circumscribed by murderous enemies or conditions over whom—or which—he or she must prevail, else life is forfeit? The hero about to be hanged? The heroine struggling against a watery grave? A character apparently dead who is discovered to be alive?

As set down in cold type these situations are *not* suspense. They are "the bunk"—old stuff that had its day when Plato was young. They are "devices"—mechanical things—that may be likened to the carpenter's scrollsaw which, in the hands of a clever artisan, is capable of shaping wood or metal into such form that the finished object elicits admiration, arouses emotion, plays upon the senses.

The scrollsaw is nothing to get excited about as it lies in the carpenter's chest. Nobody probably ever cheered lustily over this humble tool in its dormant condition. Nor does the dormant imagination dictate live, vivid suspense to the manuscript. More to the point: Dull, dead stories that depend on "scrollsaw" suspenses as such, do not inspire fiction editors to reach eagerly for the voucher pad or to plead eagerly with the treasurer to strain the budget in favor of a story that *must not get out of the office*.

Yet each of the situations—old, hackneyed and overworked as it is—becomes potent if used in the proper setting. If your brother, sister, sweetheart, father, mother, friend were beset by danger, struggling against odds, accused of crime, plunged into a seething whirlpool, and you had no assurance that there would be a triumphant emergence therefrom—you would experience the sensations of hectic suspense.

For instance: You read, sometime ago, that a young woman swam the English Channel. If nothing more had appeared in the public press than the bare facts (well, not "bare," because Gertrude wore a one-piece bathing suit, goggles and a coat of grease!) you would have muttered something about folks that haven't anything better to do than make a bid for publicity, and thought nothing more about it. But—

When you read—as you did—that the young woman is an *American* girl, you swell up with patriotic pride; you have a fraternal feeling for the courageous swimmer. When you learn that she is the first of her sex to accomplish the superhuman feat, you tell yourself, "These American girls have the world whipped!" When you ascertain, further, that she clipped hours from all previous records, made by men, and "furriners" at that, your interest quickens to the point when you experience a very real, personal affection toward her. She becomes, almost, a member of your household—conversationally. The feature writers have done this for you. They have made you acquainted with Gertrude Ederle.

**S**UPPOSE you create a fiction character who is as *alive*, vivid, colorful, as Gertrude Ederle—and make her an actor in one of the illustrative "scrollsaw" suspenses. Would she "get across?" You tell 'em! Anything such a person does will be interesting, fascinating to your reader—provided she acts in character.

Suspense, then, is mostly a matter of "warming up" your readers to your "sympathetic character." If you portray John Jones, a personable youth, walking along the road and looking for adventure, you will leave your audience cold. If you further depict young Jones as being picked up by a pretty flapper in an automobile, it begins

to look as if you were trying to put across a "scrollsaw" situation. If you continue the episode by having the flapper ask John to risk his life in a mysterious hazard that involves someone he does not know—and he consents—you are characterizing your potential hero as a sap who allows his admiration for a pretty face to override his discretion. Thus, even if John goes through with the adventure, thrashes several villains and "does his stuff" in stalwart fashion, he is still a "lay figure" on whom events have been hung for fiction purposes—to provide a *forced* suspense.

But if John were someone the reader *knew*—to whose destiny vital interest attached—even so commonplace a matter as his walking down the road would contain a pleasant element of suspense. Indeed, the way has been prepared by making you *like* him, which arouses your concern for whatever the future may have in store. If the good-looking girl comes along the road *now*, you have a feeling that she exercises good judgment in picking out *your friend* to help her in her time of need. She sees that John is the type of man who won't rush blindly into something he doesn't understand. Consequently she tells him explicitly the nature of the enterprise which she is unable to handle alone. John is intrigued; he sees wherein he can give intelligent aid and help to right a wrong—and, perhaps, further his own ends. When John, later, is in conflict with antagonistic forces, the reader does not think of him as "circumscribed by enemies," but has a tense, personal interest in the outcome of John's affairs.

That is, the reader is thus intrigued if, after becoming acquainted with John, the author's "style" has that distinctive quality which makes for easy and convincing continuity.

The writer who depends on words—instead of their *effect*—is at a disadvantage because his "scrollsaw"—the tool of his trade—is visible to the reader. Recently there came to hand a manuscript wherein the characters continually exclaimed at each other in what was obviously an effort by the author to impress on the reader the drama of a situation. They frequently expressed commiseration, one with another, or admiration, to bring out the pathos or cleverness of a passage. The story finally "ran to style" so flagrantly that an excellent plot was almost lost in a maze of verbiage, ex-

pletives, cries and agonies—distracting from the subject-matter and concentrating attention on the *author's* language. There are, of course, "best sellers" who are stylists; but they are so much the exception that the average author is taking a long chance when he attempts to inflame words. Irvin Cobb has been getting along pretty well by writing about people and making them fascinating. He is prone to let phrases do their duty without causing them to become conspicuous; yet he is conceded to have a "distinguished style."

Hence, it becomes apparent that suspense does not become real, gripping, unless backed up by capable characterization and a smooth-flowing "style."

Another element is inextricably part and parcel of suspense: Drama—Without it, suspense is null and void. You have drama when the mortgage on the old homestead is about to be foreclosed; you have drama when a family feud denies marriage to youth and maid on conflicting sides of the quarrel; you have drama when an innocent man is sentenced to prison. Yet this indispensable ingredient to good fiction becomes comedy if characterization and style fail to do their part; either that or *melodrama* is apt to spoil an otherwise suspenseful episode by overdrawing the situation and causing a character to do or say something that spoils the effect of realism and breaks the enchantment that has been woven into a tense climax.

Illustrative of these phases: A recent manuscript depicted this scene: "She rained kisses on his dear, dead face." A moment later—in the narrative—"his dear, dead face" was wreathed in a smile of affection and the heroine was cuddled in the arms that had been "lifeless." A good many readers would rebel against the "dear" as over-sentimentalizing—an obvious effort to force compassion—and all would either resent the author's patent deception in pronouncing a sentient character defunct, or would chuckle over the dead coming to life thus informally.

Another story causes the self-contained hero to hiss: "You villain!" "You coward!" at his enemy. (The typographical error heightened the comedy effect, but the unnatural exclamation would have been intrusive anyhow.) If the villain was a coward, it was hardly necessary for the hero to expatriate on the gentleman's shortcomings.

The action had already advised the reader of this fact; besides, the hero was "out of character" in uttering the exclamatory phrase.

**SUSPENSE** carried to the ultimate is written into two of Sabatini's books. In one, the hero is hanged—by the neck—dropped from the scaffold. He is carted away to the dissecting room. The illusion of death is well-nigh perfect; yet when he is resurrected, there is no word or phrase whereby the reader may accuse the author of deception. The reader is witness to the hanging; he can almost hear the hero's neck pop; and when this character begins to regain consciousness, one is inclined to take an aspirin tablet as relief for the sympathetic headache that assails him.

The other Sabatinian suspense occurs when the heroine is pronounced dead as a result of poison. She is laid in state in the church where the hero finds her—breathing but unconscious—in her casket. Again the illusion of death is so nicely worded that the reader believes, in all conscience, that the novel will have an "unhappy ending." The "style" carries you along irresistibly on the current of plausibility; the characters never fail to act naturally; there is no melodrama to irk the sensibilities. It is simply a tense, convincing situation where stark drama plays upon the emotions without discord.

Analyzed, it is a "scrollsaw suspense"—a "character apparently dead is discovered to be alive."



## The Kindest Cut of All

By C. W. CALLAHAN

**H**AVE you ever experienced the mixed pleasure of having a story returned with the words, "We like your tale, but it is too long for our use. If you are willing to cut it down to 3000 words—" and so on? Of course you are willing. No tyro could afford to be otherwise. But how to do it!

The most unwelcome work of my newspaper career fell to my lot when I was cast by the Sunday editor to cut into one-page installments sundry serials for which the paper had purchased second serial rights. They were always thousands of words too long for the length of time they were to run, and had to be cut to just so many installments of 4500 or 5000 words each, according to the size of the illustration.

It was a loathsome job, especially when such good stuff as Mrs. Rhinehart's "K" or one of Mrs. Norris's came along. To lop off thousands of words from novels such as these seemed sacrilegious from my sub-editorial viewpoint. Hence I went at my job very painstakingly, spending much more time upon it than I know I was given credit for. But it paid. I learned how to cut painlessly. When I had finished slashing a 110,000 word novel by Kathleen Norris to 65,000 words without inserting a new

word, losing one thread of the story, causing any discrepancies, or destroying the flavor of the tale, I gave myself a degree in this course of editorial endeavor.

When a piece of work comes back to be cut, I generally attack it this way: First I cut off its head—the beginning—and jump into my story several laps along. This tactic is invariably good for several hundred words. Then I read it with a super-critical eye for any superfluous thread that has been carried along for no particular reason other than that I liked it. It is not hard to find such extraneous matter once I know that the fate of the yarn depends upon cutting all this out. If it hurts a lot, I console myself by storing it away for another story.

I have cut away the dead wood, but I am still some hundreds of words to the bad. Now I try condensing scenes, running several together. (Incidentally this often strengthens the unities.) Next I turn all uninteresting conversation into short paragraphs of indirect discourse. Lastly, I boil down sentences and phrases into connotative, picture-creating words.

No story ever came to harm by intelligent cutting. On the contrary, it usually strengthens the tale and brings to light the reason why it did not sell the first time out.



# Pitfalls of Mystery-Story Writing

BY REBECCA N. PORTER

*Instructor in Short-Story Writing, University of California*



REBECCA N. PORTER

anyone read statistics after they were compiled, they might reveal the astounding fact that the mystery story has done as much as golf to keep The Tired Business Man fit and the overworked statesman sane. Yet the vast majority of these beneficiaries remain a strictly secret fraternity.

The reason for this is to be found in: first, the theme, and, second, the attitude of the author himself toward it.

In writing a love story the author does not first attempt to cajole the reader into accepting love as the legitimate motive for his plot. He doesn't need to. Love, ambition, loneliness, revenge, all these are properly accredited emotions. They are in the preferred list on the fictional stock market. Everyone is presumed to have interest-bearing certificates in one or another of them and to be paying an inheritance tax upon them all. They need neither explanation nor apology.

But mystification is a different matter. Its psychology is more complex because education has distorted our very wholesome at-

THERE is no form of fiction with so many secret devotees and so few public champions as the story of mystery. Many women and almost all men are guilty of seeking this form of entertainment in moments of solitary relaxation. If statistics upon the subject could be compiled, and if

titude toward it. To see a fellow creature tortured by love or loneliness, or the desire to "get somewhere" or "get even," touches a responsive chord in the reader's heart. To see him mystified merely moves that same reader to derision and contempt. Despite the fact that curiosity (which is mystification in action) has given us everything that we have in this life, it is in ill-repute and has been relegated, in our ultra sophisticated age, to the exclusive use of children and ill-fated cats.

In undertaking the mystery story, then, the writer starts with heavy odds against him. He knows that his reader, if he succeeds in entrapping one, is obsessed at the outset with the fear that the author will make a fool of him. This is exactly what the author undertakes to do. But the trick of the thing lies in keeping this achievement dark. He may set about this task in any one of the following ways:

(1) Hypnotize the reader by drawing him into an atmosphere so interesting, so fascinating, so weird, that he is prepared to accept anything that may happen in such a world. Edith Wharton employs this method in almost all of her stories of the supernatural. In such a world as she creates at the outset of her story, you accept, without shame, the presence of incarnate ghosts.

(2) Precisely the reverse method, but one equally effective in the hands of a true craftsman, is the use of contrast. In the opening paragraphs of such a story, the author presents an artless pastoral picture or develops a commonplace domestic scene or indulges in sprightly dialogue. Then, having gone through his reader's pockets and disarmed him, he precipitates him suddenly into the realm of mystery. This is an ef-

factual device for catching that type of reader who shies off from the "sinister atmosphere" type of lead. It is less artistic but often more dramatic than the first method.

(3) Then there is the typical "action lead." In the opening sentences, George Dark, hurrying along the street, hears a shot ring out, or is knocked senseless by a truck, or stumbles over the dead body of his landlady. Almost anybody will read on, after such a scene, to find out how it all happened, or what becomes of the culprit. The chief problem of the writer of such vivid action is to keep up the pace. Much more is expected of him in the way of inexplicable adventure than of the creator of atmosphere or contrast.

(4) Still another device, fortunately obsolescent now, is to arouse the reader's interest by direct challenge. This trick is employed by Poe and some of his contemporaries. He begins his "Black Cat" in some such language as this: "For this most wild but homely story, I neither solicit nor expect belief. Mad indeed it sounds and mad indeed would be the one who believed it . . ." The appeal for credulity by seeming to disdain it is too crude a bait for the modern sophisticated reader. But Poe is not, strictly speaking, a writer of mystery, but a writer of horror. And horror has always had good standing among the literary emotions.

**W**IDELY though they differ in *method*, the *purpose* of all these leads is the same—to overcome the caution of the reader and invite him into the illicit fields. The chief weakness of the mystery story lies in the fact that the spider, having caught his fly, discards cunning and makes no provision for the dangerous "after effects." And this brings us to the very core of the mystery dilemma.

For on three separate counts this form of fiction fails to attain to the artistic status that its large following would seem to justify. No matter how cleverly the writer sets his trap, the reader is sure to have a shame-faced feeling of having indulged in a tawdry pastime, unless—

The problem of the story is a real rather than an artificial one. The quest of a pearl necklace is as foreign to the interests of most readers as would be the quest of a

mermaid. Even the old theme, "Who Killed Cock Robin?" is lustreless unless either Robin or his assassin be made a real and human personality instead of a piece of fictional machinery. And this suggests the second great weakness.

The mystery story is tawdry unless—

There is some attempt at characterization. The appalling lack of it keeps this type of fiction in the underworld of art. The argument is sometimes advanced that subtle characterization would distract from the plot effect. A story does not need to be a subtle psychological research paper in order to contain a human element. Any situation is vitalized by putting into it a vital personality. Any story is weakened by having puppets for characters. Most of the men and women who move through the pages of mystery and detective yarns neither excite nor deserve the slightest sympathy. *And the ability to arouse sympathy is the final test of all fiction.*

The third count concerns plot. It is a tawdry thing unless—

Ingenuity be substituted for mere freakishness. Here the reader's resentment may certainly be justified. For though the mystery writer may argue that characterization and theme are irrelevant to his stock in trade, clever plotting may be reasonably sought there. The well-written story should build, into its foundation the key that is eventually to unlock its door. Motivation, preparation for the climax, is the ever-present concern of the mystery author. It must be craftily done, so that the reader is totally unsuspecting, and at the end he should say: "Of course. I ought to have thought of that key, but it went right out of my mind." To entrap your character in a burning building from which there is apparently no escape, and then discover all at once that he is a chemist who has with him his newest invention in fire extinguishers, is a cheap and inartistic trick. It may startle, but it does not convince. And suicides who stab themselves with convenient icicles, thus leaving no trace of a weapon, invite mirth rather than horror.

It would seem, in an age which demands "Service" as a commercial ideal, that the ever-clamorous consumers of mystery might be provided with a first-class brand of their favorite fiction. Although they read in secret, they do read. To get read is the goal

"Well," he observes, "what are you, then, an income tax collector?"

"No," the writer replies, "I go around getting up editorial articles that are used, sometimes, by this publication. You're familiar with the magazine, I suppose."

The attention of the merchant is directed to the magazine.

"Oh, yes," says the merchant, "I get it regularly."

"You know the sort of stuff I want, then," says the writer, pointing out articles in the publication dealing with various hardware stores. "Here's an article describing the sort of newspaper advertising one hardware store is employing. You use newspaper advertising, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, we go in for all the usual advertising mediums—newspapers, direct mail, outdoor advertising, and so on and so forth."

"What do you find your best bet?" the writer asks. "Which kind of advertising brings the greater results and is most satisfactory all the way around?"

This sort of a question usually gets the merchant started to talking. He tells about his experience with the various advertising mediums, discusses special advertising stunts he has put across, results achieved from the use of different mediums, tells why he favors one medium more than another, and so forth.

In all this there may be something unusual, something strikingly different from the usual run of retail advertising which may form the basis for a striking story. Or all of it may be the most commonplace stuff imaginable. In either case, however, a talk about advertising or about window displays is a splendid method of getting the average merchant interested and talkative.

And that, of course, should be the object of the writer in all interviews—to make the person who is being interviewed talk his head off. It is only by making the merchant or manufacturer do a lot of talking that the writer is able to secure the ideas and material which can be woven into a trade-paper article that will sell.

In the course of the interview the writer, very probably, will make an inspection of the store or factory under the guidance of the merchant or manufacturer and he will ask for photographs, samples of bookkeeping forms, direct-mail advertising, special printed matter of all kinds and anything else that looks interesting.

Now it is evident that upon the writer himself depends the sort of an article that is written as the result of an interview. Two writers, for instance, might interview the same merchant. One writer would get a corking good article out of the interview while the other would get a bunch of junk that wouldn't sell anywhere.

What is the answer to this?

ONE answer is that in order to get the utmost possible out of an interview the writer must be prepared in advance. His preparation must include these things:

Complete familiarity with the type of material being published in the trade papers.

Complete familiarity with the usual merchandising or manufacturing practices in various lines, so that he will not present as new something that is merely a routine part of every-day business.

Some familiarity with what the merchant or manufacturer he is interviewing is doing. This familiarity can be secured by looking at the newspaper advertisements of the concern, by inspecting window displays and the store or plant itself, by talking with neighbors, and so on. Such a course enables the writer to get a general idea of the highlights of the business and thus direct the talk to the points about which he desires to secure information.

In addition, unless he has an especially well-trained memory, he should take copious notes of everything said during the interview, so that nothing will be overlooked when the time comes to frame the article.

All of which calls for distinct effort and time and thought, but is worth while, because it leads to the writing of articles that sell easily and quickly to the best trade papers at good prices.

of all authors, but to get *read again* is the happy fortune of but few. The writer of good mystery stuff is rewarded by an additional tribute; he is *bought*.

"People get love stories out of the library," said the proprietor of a large book

store to me the other day. "But they buy mystery stories." They buy them, it seems, to cheer the hours of the sick, to speed departing travelers, to commemorate anniversaries. They might buy even more lavishly were "the party of the first part" a bit more scrupulous in fulfilling his contract.



## A Secret of Trade-Paper Writing

BY FRANK H. WILLIAMS

**T**HE secret of achieving success in writing for the trade papers lies almost entirely in the interview. I maintain that the writer who wishes to make money writing for these markets needs only to interview store and factory executives and individuals in the lines for which the papers are published and then put down on paper in an interesting and entertaining manner the most important and strikingly newsy material secured in this way.

It is possible, of course, to write stuff that is not based on interviews and still sell it to the trade papers. Such material may deal with advertising and promotion propositions or with the reactions of the general public or ultimate consumer to the goods offered for sale or to the services rendered, and so on. But these articles are harder to sell than interview stuff.

Many years of experience as a free-lance writer for trade papers has convinced me that the interview is the big thing in this field and that anyone who is able to secure interviews, who has a news sense which enables him to pick the highlights out of the things said by those interviewed, and the ability to turn out intelligent and readable copy can make a success in the work.

I have found, though, in talking with various writers who have tried trade-paper writing without success, that it is difficult for them to secure interviews. They dislike the thought of interviewing, find it embarrassing to approach people, and seem unable to develop worth-while articles even when interviews are secured.

No doubt there is a certain knack to se-

curing interviews, but it may be an acquired knack. It calls chiefly for ease of manner and quick thinking.

Let us go through the process of securing an interview with a merchant and see just how it is done.

Here, then, we'll say, is Henry Brown, a hardware merchant in a city of 50,000. An inspection of Mr. Brown's show windows and store reveals the fact that his establishment looks like a live-wire institution which should develop something worth while for a hardware publication. It is, accordingly, determined to interview Mr. Brown.

The writer then secures a copy of the publication to which he wishes to sell the material secured from Mr. Brown. We'll say it is *The Hardware Star*. There isn't such a publication, but the name will serve just as well.

Armed with a copy of *The Hardware Star*, the writer enters the store, asks for Mr. Brown and is directed to his office on the balcony at the rear of the store.

Mr. Brown looks up in a somewhat hostile manner as the writer comes up the stairway. Usually it is a salesman who approaches in this manner; as it is afternoon and Mr. Brown sees salesmen only in the morning, he regards the visitor in a not very friendly manner.

**T**HE writer at once clears the atmosphere by saying something like this:

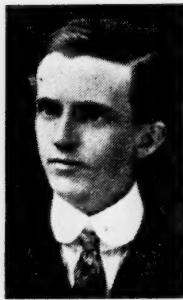
"I'm not here to sell you anything—or to buy anything, either. I'm different from the usual fellows."

Brown looks interested, but skeptical.



## You Never Can Tell!

BY LESLIE E. DUNKIN



LESLIE E. DUNKIN

THE promising uncertainty involved in producing and marketing manuscripts has somewhat of a gambling appeal to the writer who takes his work seriously. "You never can tell!" is written all over his work and experience.

Ever since I can remember anything, I have had the writer's itch. At first I was rather ashamed of it. Some fourteen years ago I whispered my ambitions to a friend. His quick reply was, "Try it! You never can tell!" I tried. Today, though I am not a famous writer, I am spending all my time at the work I like best. Try it! You never can tell!

For five long years I wrote more or less regularly with no returns except the usual rejection slips. In desperation I finally destroyed all my manuscripts and my writing material, determined not to follow the tantalizing mirage. But the itch came back. A short-story was written, bringing the first check. Within six months checks had been received from ten different publications. It pays to try to a little longer. You never can tell.

I prepared an article for a definite market that paid a cent a word. However, I had another manuscript at that place upon which no report had been received. Rather than hold the new one idle, I sent it to a different market, assuming that by the time it was returned, the first would be open. To my surprise the article was not returned. In its place came a check at the rate of two cents a word. It pays to try a new market occasionally.

I studied a publication and reached the conclusion that it would be improved with the introduction of a special department. I prepared what I had in mind and submitted

it. The department was accepted and has continued now for two years. It pays to start things. Y. N. C. T.!

Came a letter asking me to try my hand at preparing material for a department for another publication. Later I talked with the editor personally and asked how he happened to select me. "We went through our correspondence file and a letter you enclosed with one of your short-stories impressed us that you were the man we wanted," was the reply. So it may pay to enclose letters, if they are short and to the point and are written with care.

Another publication wrote that its regular contributor was unable to prepare his copy that month, and asking me to substitute for him. The request looked "suspicious" to me. I put in extra good licks and a prompt letter told me that the job was mine regularly. Later this same publication sent me two books, telling me that they were on subjects in which I was especially interested and asking me to write a review of each. This, too, looked significant. I did my best, and now more or less regularly books come to be reviewed.

I had cultivated a certain market until my monthly checks ranged around \$50. I thought I was sitting pretty. Like a flash the publication changed its editorial policy. My monthly check dropped to \$5 and has never revived. Two other publications with which I thought I was sitting pretty suddenly changed editors, and ceased to buy my stuff. It is unwise to depend overly much on a few markets. You never can tell.

I kept whittling down my steady jobs and increasing my writing work. Finally I could whittle no more without plunging out in writing work in a sink-or-swim fashion. Mrs. Dunkin said, "Try it! You never can tell!" I did, and since then, we have been going along solely on the writing checks. Take a chance if you are fairly sure of yourself.

I had prepared a manuscript that I felt would fit a certain publication. The market reports said this publication did not consider outside material. I was unwilling to drop it there. The manuscript was accepted and since then I have sold to this market regularly. Try once at least—if the manuscript is particularly suited to the market.

"Why don't you write for a drug-store trade journal?" asked a druggist friend of mine. The idea looked good enough to try. Since then I have sold more or less regularly to drug store publications. One editor said he liked my material because I wrote as though I had had drug store experience. It pays to try a variety of markets. Your special field may be discovered in this way.

One day I happened to be looking through the large pile of idle manuscripts in my desk drawer. A serial was there, that on reading seemed good enough to send out. A worth-

while check was returned for it within two weeks. It does not pay to let manuscripts lie idle in your desk. You never can tell.

A manuscript came back for the twenty-fifth time. "I'll shoot it out once more," I decided, "and then I'll junk it." An apology came from the twenty-sixth editor saying that the manuscript was worth far more than he could afford to pay, but if I would accept a cent a word for it, I might send it back and a check would be forthcoming. The manuscript was shot right back. It pays to send it out "once more" each time.

In conclusion, I might say that I have had in mind for a year and a half writing an article, entitled, "You Never Can Tell!" for THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST and its large family of readers. The article has just been written and here it is. It pays to put your intentions on paper and submit them to the editor. You never can tell!

## Trade, Technical and Class Journal Department

JOHN T. BARTLETT, EDITOR

### "RAW DEALS"—AND EDITORIAL OVERSIGHTS

HAVE you been accorded a "raw deal," lately? What did you do about it?

The department editor's experience is that at least 90 per cent of "raw deals" can be adjusted satisfactorily through a frank letter, followed up if necessary, to the publisher or editor. We write hundreds of such letters each year, and the situations not satisfactorily adjusted are a small fraction of all. "Raw deals" are often only innocent editorial oversights.

Trade journals and editors are human—like writers. They blunder. They sometimes forget that an article has definitely been accepted, and return it. They lose credit lines, so that publication occurs without payment. They forget agreed-on rates of payment. Now and then a new editor, not understanding editorial obligations, slams back to writers all the articles in the former editor's files. Another man forgets to get permission to cut radically, then pays on the basis of what he publishes. The sources of complaints and misunderstandings are a hundred and one.

Old hands don't get excited. They write to the editor, stating the facts. If this letter isn't an-

swered, they write a second, and, if necessary, a third, a fourth.

Occasionally, an editor takes offense, but nine editors in ten, the department editor's experience shows, will meet the writer half way. Once the adjustment is made, relations continue as pleasant as before.

In the give-and-take of intimate business relations, writers should gladly concede small points in a spirit of accommodation. But "raw deals"—No! They are too often nothing but innocent oversights and errors!

### A DAILY NINE THOUSAND

FROM time to time, production figures of professional writers, in terms of daily, monthly or yearly output, have been given in the A. & J.

Six years ago Frank H. Williams left a staff position on *Printers' Ink*, New York, and began to free-lance. Most of his articles went to trade journals. His first weekly quota was 20,000 words. With *Printers' Ink* Williams had earned \$85 a week writing articles on advertising, covering conventions, and the like. He was out to exceed this income, and he did, within a year or so.

Up and up, from year to year, went the word-quota. As 1927 starts, Williams tells us, he is doing 7000 to 9000 words a day. A part of the feat is the type of article he favors—"idea stuff," as brother professionals term it,—but that detracts little from the glory. A high percentage of the 9000 words is published. And Williams accomplishes the quota not on an occasional day, but week after week!

Is there any professional writer in the United States, writing any type of material, who equals Williams on production, or, for that matter, comes within hand-shaking distance of him? We doubt it.

#### FIND THE PROBLEM

TRADE and technical writers when interviewing pick up much detailed fact material which, on first consideration, seems valueless for article use. For example—

1. A well-painted paint-store front.
2. Methods of a hardware dealer who "junked" his window displays.
3. A grocery store's soda fountain. (Story in straight descriptive form declined by several publications.)
4. A small town firm which operated a battery station, did electrical contracting, and sold farm lighting plants.

Much miscellaneous material like this can be converted to helpful article use, if the interviewer will persistently question his source, and go over his facts, until a problem is found to which the information bears the relation of solution. The problem-solution formula for articles is liked by trade and technical editors, and in any general rating will be near the top.

A famous French slogan may be paraphrased for trade and technical writers—"Find the problem." For example, near the paint store mentioned was the town's corner of greatest sidewalk traffic. Pausing here, people often glanced down the side street. The orange store front attracted their attention. The article was built on the title, "Hesitation Corner."

Hardware magazines are hard to "make"—but when the window display data was presented against the background of a fundamental hardware store problem, many departments to promote and little window space for promotion, the article sold at once.

The grocery soda fountain material was submitted as part of a location problem discussion—Can a grocery store be handled for profit in an expensive corner location, and, if so, how?

Economic difficulties, met with in selling expert electrical service in small towns, were the problems used for "4." How one named firm had overcome these with an unusual trade combination was explained.

Problem-solution articles should present the problem first, briefly. A few typewritten lines may be all that is required, though, with the well-ampli-

fied solution, the completed article goes to 1500 words or more. The interest for the reader is mainly in the solution.

#### A DEPARTMENT CREDIT INFORMATION SERVICE

ELSEWHERE in these notes the department editor comments on the high percentage of grievances which the business writer can adjust by writing to editors with frankness.

Publishing, like every other business, has its concerns and individuals, some of whose policies in buying matters do not operate for the seller's satisfaction. A co-operative exchange of credit information among trade and technical writers would seem to meet an important need. The general plan is followed by thousands of co-operating groups in business. Writers, taking it up, can expect it to be productive of extensive good.

AUTHOR & JOURNALIST readers, when a trade or technical publication refuses to right a just grievance, are invited to make a full report to the department editor. Such reports will be held confidential.

As situations in which several writers figure appear, co-operative efforts to adjust can be undertaken.

Please report publications, paying on publication, which habitually make mistakes in checking published matter, so that writers cannot safely entrust to them checking and payment. Report editors who accumulate large quantities of material over periods of months, then return wholesale. Report publications from which payment is hard to secure; which report manuscripts returned, though writer has not received them (manuscripts are very seldom lost in the mails); which hold seasonable material until value is lost; which cut heavily without permission; which pay lower rates than offered, or stipulated by writer; which return articles after editorial preparation for the printer.

Editorial offices which have "bad habits" are relatively few, but are a problem big enough to make listing worth while. There is reason to believe that, in frequent cases, a co-operative attempt will secure satisfaction though individuals have long failed.

J. E. Bullard, Rhode Island business writer of many years' experience, has earnestly advocated credit co-operations, and already a number of the more active writers for trade journals are informally exchanging information. This is an invitation for general participation in the plan.

#### A DRUGGIST'S CONFESSIONS

"Confession" articles have begun to appear in trade journals. The department editor has read a number of late. A filling station attendant related intimate experiences with various employers. An anonymous bank publicity manager, writing on printing buying methods, called a spade a spade. A druggist, once a price-cutter, told of his "degradation" and reform.

In the

Amer

Chicago

value to

lin, edi

display

tion me

ested in

gifts, v

will ma

as  $\frac{1}{2}$  t

stands

This is

should

with th

South

Publish

Joe Bu

"The S

ket for

words

retail

should

his suc

on pub

Nuge

one of

ris, edi

called

cerning

anywh

should

ing to

better

effectiv

may de

New s

sell me

flat rat

ional

Ame

Chicago

that co

exclusiv

ican L

respon

is usu

writes.

The de

ing at

quently

Good

Broadw

window

and li

G. K.

for ac

good."

**Literary Market Tips***In the Trade, Technical, and Class Journal Field*

*American Florist*, 61 W. Washington Street, Chicago, wants articles not over 500 words, of value to owners of retail flower stores. Olin Joslin, editor, mentions special sale ideas, window display suggestions, accounting methods, collection methods, and adds: "We are specially interested in articles on side-lines for flower shops—gifts, vases, goldfish, canaries, etc.—anything that will make a profitable side-line." Rates are stated as  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 cents. The department editor understands that  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent is the rate commonly paid. This is not a "wide-open" market, and writers should not, at least until contact is established with the editor, submit material heavily.

*Southwestern Retailer*, Progressive Merchant Publishing Company, Dallas, Texas, is a monthly. Joe Buckingham is managing editor. He says, "The *Southwestern Retailer* is always in the market for feature stories of not more than 1000 words based on actual interviews with successful retail dealers in its own territory." Articles should explain how the retailer has accomplished his success. Rates are moderate, with payment on publication.

*Nugents*, 1225 Broadway, New York City, is one of the Allen business papers. Clinton G. Harris, editor, has recently established a department called "Little Ideas That Went Over Big." Concerning it, he writes, "These features should run anywhere from 50 to 150 words in length. They should tell tersely what progressive stores are doing to increase sales in ready-to-wear lines, earn a better profit, develop new business, increase the effectiveness of their advertising or displays. They may deal with improved methods of management. New stunts or new ideas, exploited profitably to sell merchandise, are wished." The editor offers a flat rate of \$4 each for articles accepted. Additional compensation is made for photographs.

*American Lumberman*, 431 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, is glad to examine "good feature stories that convey helpful merchandising ideas, and are exclusive." A. L. Ford is managing editor. *American Lumberman* maintains a staff of regular correspondents in principal cities of the country, and is usually well covered on its needs, Mr. Ford writes. He does not state rates of compensation. The department editor knows \$5 per column, figuring at about \$7.50 per thousand, to have been frequently paid for features.

*Good Hardware and Progressive Grocer*, 912 Broadway, New York City, want photographs of window displays, store interiors, display fixtures, and like subjects, with about 100 words of text. G. K. Hanchett, managing editor, stipulates that for acceptance photographs must be "particularly good." "We can also use," he states, "short items

describing merchandising ideas, store fixtures and helps of any kind that retailers are using successfully. These need not be accompanied by finished drawings, but a rough sketch often helps in describing the idea. This material is paid for at the rate of 1 to 2 cents a word." Both these publications pay on acceptance. They are pocket-size magazines, monthly.

*The Furniture Journal*, 537 Dearborn Street, Chicago, is an old-established trade magazine which purchases comparatively little material from professional writers. "We are getting just a little fed up on success stories," Lee S. Arthur, editor, writes *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*, "and would like to have something with more meat in it—a rather difficult thing to secure, I will admit, because the men capable of writing this are generally too busy with their own affairs to dip outside." Mr. Arthur does not state rates, but the department editor understands them to be good. Much of the matter in *The Furniture Journal* is contributed by men engaged in the furniture trade.

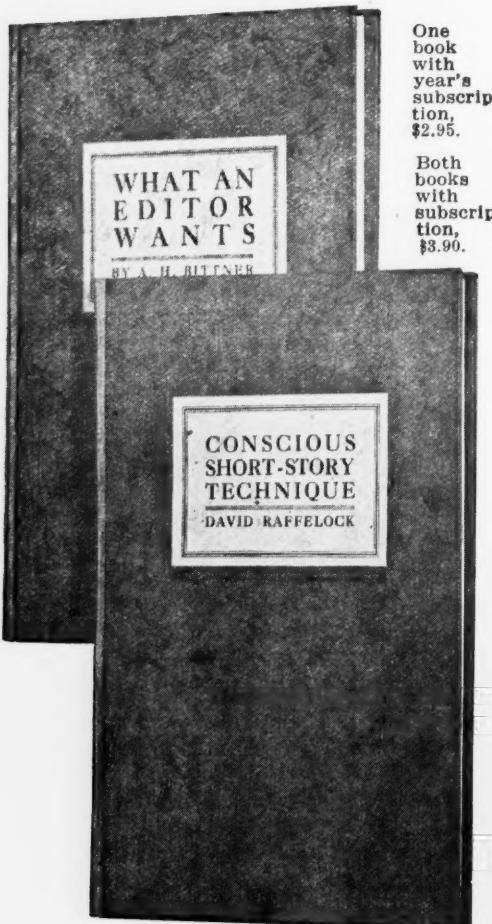
*Furniture Record*, Grand Rapids, Mich., is edited by Eagle Freshwater. He writes, "Our buying needs for the next few months are limited largely to fact stories on the successful operating of a radio department in furniture stores, or the selling of floor coverings, draperies, curtains, window shades, etc. And we are always interested, of course, in business-method stories."

*Inland Merchant*, Harry S. Vorhis, editor, 1170 Broadway, New York, desires articles on merchandising in country and small-town stores, up to one thousand words. Mr. Vorhis states that payment is made at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 cent per word, according to value.

*Bus Transportation*, Tenth Avenue at Thirty-sixth Street, New York, is one of the McGraw-Hill group of publications. Cameron A. Robertson, assistant editor, writes that the magazine wants articles "containing ideas that can be put to use by the bus operating companies we serve and which should enable them to give better service, to lower costs, to improve maintenance methods, or to make more money. The publication does not want," Mr. Robertson states, "general descriptive stories regarding a particular bus operation. Ideas already in use by some bus operating companies are what is desired." Rates paid are \$7.50 a thousand, on publication.

*Topics Publishing Company*, 291 Broadway, New York, is "looking for straight merchandising material with ever a new slant—tested ideas and plans for selling merchandise, as well as good window display stories, and solid practical information on every angle of running the drug store, from planning for economy of space to running the books." Murray Breese is managing editor. The Topics publications, which include *Drug Topics*, *Display Topics*, and *Drug Jobbers' Salesman*, pay 1 cent a word on publication.

## PRACTICAL BOOKS FOR WRITERS



**CONSCIOUS SHORT-STORY TECHNIQUE,**  
By David Raffelock, Associate Editor,  
The Author & Journalist. **Postpaid, \$1.10**

It leads the way to clear thinking in order that the reader himself may be able to choose the best development for his story.

**WHAT AN EDITOR WANTS.** Postpaid, \$1.10  
By A. H. Bittner, Associate Editor, The Frontier.

So full of practical help that it deserves a place on the bookshelf of everyone who aspires to write fiction. Plot is treated from a new angle. One of the unique and practical features is the building up of a plot from original germinal idea to complete short-story. It makes clear the considerations which govern an editor's choice of fiction.

Other Recommendations, and Prices Postpaid  
**Fundamentals of Fiction Writing**, Arthur Sullivan Hoffman. \$2.15.

**Fiction Writers On Fiction Writing**, Hoffman. \$2.65.

**Plotting the Short-Story**, Culpepper Chunn. \$1.10.  
**The 36 Dramatic Situations**, Polti. \$1.65.

**Writing to Sell**, Edwin Wildman. \$2.15.

**The Business of Writing**, Holliday and Van Rensselaer. \$2.15.

The Author & Journalist

1839 Champa St.

Denver, Colo.

## WRITECRAFTERS

Endorsed by Editors and Authors

Writecrafter have helped their clients sell to *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Cosopolitan*, *McClure's*, *Everybody's*, *American*, *Adventure*, *Munsey's*, etc. All manuscripts receive the personal attention of A. L. Kimball, an editor and consulting critic of established reputation and 15 years' experience, who has helped thousands of writers to a better understanding of story values and editorial requirements. Send for particulars.

**A. L. KIMBALL**, Writecrafter  
518 Wilder Bldg., Charlotte, N. C.

### Don't Twiddle YOUR Thumbs

Rather, sit down at your typewriter and turn out salable manuscripts. But how?

My Service will show you, increasing your sales and lessening your labor. Send for my circular.

**GEORGE B. POTTER**  
220 No. Beacon Street Hartford, Conn.

### ROBERT THOMAS HARDY

Play Broker and Author's Agent

Formerly editor of *Snappy Stories*. Has also been on the editorial staff of the J. B. Lippincott Company, Street & Smith, and the Munsey publications. All manuscripts are given Mr. Hardy's personal attention. Send for full information.

**47 West 42d Street, New York, N. Y.**

### SOMETHING DIFFERENT!

"Quality Typing Service"  
offers manuscript preparation for  
Particular People.

**REVISING — TYPING — MARKETING**  
Write for particulars and samples.

**AUGUST LENNIGER**  
Authors' Agent

4247 Boyd Avenue New York City

### THE WRITER'S MONTHLY

Edited by J. BERG ESENWEIN

*A Magazine of Real Help for all Who Write.*  
**MARY ROBERTS RINEHART** says: "The Writer's Monthly looks awfully good to me. For years I have been telling beginning authors that there is nothing in the world so good for them as such a magazine. It puts them in touch with publications they would otherwise not think of. So many writers live away from New York, and since by the very nature of the work it must be done in solitude, it seems to me that such a magazine coming in once a month is like hand-shakes from a fellow craftsman."

Single copies 25 cents \$3.00 a year  
Write for special offers

**THE WRITER'S MONTHLY**, Dept. 63  
Springfield, Mass.

*Independent Salesman*, 22 E. Twelfth Street, Cincinnati, began with the January issue publication in a new size—8½ by 11¼ inches. W. E. Backus, editor, invites articles, 1500 to 4000 words, on problems of selling direct from maker to user. He uses short-stories on direct selling themes, 1500 to 4000 words, and two-part direct-sales serials, 2500 to 3500 words each part. He cautions fiction writers, "Avoid love, or make it merely incidental." He purchases editorials of 50 to 350 words. He is overstocked on verse and short miscellany. All humorous material used is clipped. Rates are, "around 1 cent, depending on merit."

*National Laundry Journal*, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, semi-monthly, pays ½ cent a word on publication. R. E. Ireton, editor, writes that he wishes articles of 1200 words on washroom practices, illustrated.

*Lumber*, Columbia Building, St. Louis, Missouri, is no longer published. It is succeeded by *Lumber Manufacturer & Dealer*, 4908 Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis, a fortnightly of which Ralph T. McQuinn is editor.

*Sporting Goods Journal*, 542 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, purchases feature articles on sporting-goods-store and department merchandising, and trade news. H. C. Hilton is editor. Payment is commonly at the rate of \$4 per thousand words.

*Western Plumber*, San Francisco, does not solicit manuscripts. "We buy comparatively little material except from regularly established sources," H. H. Marquis, editor, writes. It has a system of regular correspondents in its territory, which takes in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states.

*Specialty Salesman Magazine*, South Whitley, Ind., monthly, is buying "informational-inspirational, character building," articles, 1000 to 5000 words; inspirational short-stories, 2000 to 7000 words; and "action and inspiration" serials, 10,000 to 30,000 words. Robert E. Hicks, editor, states his rate is ½ cent up, on acceptance. Mr. Hicks advises, "Let writers refrain from attempting to write sales articles for us. Writers seem to know nothing about the subject." This magazine does not buy verse, short miscellany, or jokes.

*Lumber Manufacturer & Dealer*, 4908 Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis, mainly wants "business-building ideas tested and proved by lumber retailers, with suitable illustrative matter." Ralph T. McQuinn, managing editor, who supplies this information, continues, "We like facts clearly and concisely told, with a minimum of words. Too many journalists feel they have a message for a business man without seeking any farther than their own heads for an idea. Too many turn preachers and inspirational writers. Nothing so inspires the business man as an article that not only urges him to do a thing, but tells him how to do it."

## Do You Write to Sell?

*If so, you will be interested in increasing your income.*

The Author & Journalist has recognized a need and has filled it. Both professional and beginning writers have ordered the remarkable new book-course.

### *"How to Write a Screenable Plot Into Your Fiction Story"*

It helps them to increase their incomes by showing them the way to make their magazine stories screenable. The book is also invaluable as an aid to writing dramatic and action stories.

If you are writing to sell, you will need this unique and modern aid to the writer.

De Luxe, cloth bound book

Three free assignment criticism coupons

Booklet of assignments

Specially priced Complete, \$5 Postpaid

Order from the S. T. C. Dept., The Author & Journalist, 1839 Champa St., Denver, Colo.

Send for free booklet, "How to Sell Stories to the Moving Picture Producers."

*The Bankers Monthly*, and *The Bankers Service Bulletin*, Rand McNally & Company, 536 S. Clark Street, Chicago, use very specialized types of material, writes John Y. Beaty, associate editor. "We make use of stories of actual experiences of bankers in which the banker himself usually tells what plan he has used and what results he has obtained. It is only occasionally that a free-lance writer can get our angle because of his lack of experience in banking. He usually writes about banking rather than for bankers. Everything in our papers must be from the standpoint of the banker. We pay 1 cent a word upon publication and allow \$1 apiece for photographs."

*Hardware Retailer*, Indianapolis, and *American Paint & Oil Dealer*, St. Louis, do not desire unsolicited submissions.

*Bus Age*, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, George M. Sangster, editor, is a monthly devoted to technical articles on motorbus operation, maintenance, personnel, advertising, etc. Payment is made for material on publication at 25 cents an inch or ½ cent per word.

*The Retail Druggist Illustrated*, 250 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit, Mich., is a trade journal devoted to selling, advertising, and drug items. Douglas Newlands, editor, reports that merchandising articles with illustrations, 500 to 2000 words, are sought, also occasional serials and editorials of from 50 to 500 words. Payment is made on acceptance, rates not stated.

## It Is Not True!

that the HOFFMAN-MAXWELL PLAY COMPANY, of San Francisco, California, has no market for manuscripts!

On the contrary, this company has a most extensive, unique, and lucrative market.

**W**e are constantly leasing plays by "unknown authors" (we so designate playwrights who have not, as yet, secured a New York production) to the stock and repertoire companies throughout the United States, her territories, and Canada.

We—Ted and Virginia Maxwell—have written over forty plays which, while not one has ever been produced in New York, are earning us an interesting income. The demand for the class of play we write greatly exceeds the supply, and because of this we are most anxious to discover new writers who can write plays suitable for our market. The requirements of our market are, perhaps, unknown to the majority of writers who aspire to become playwrights, and in order to give them the benefit of our knowledge, we have written Maxwell's Play Technique.

This book clearly outlines the necessary construction of a play that is to be offered to our market, the stock and repertoire companies. A large number of these companies throughout the United States, and Canada, look to us to supply them each year with new plays. If a play "catches on" it may be presented by quite a few of these companies within one week, earning a royalty from ten to fifty dollars a presentation; when successful, it sells itself over and over again to other companies; if suitable, also, for amateur production, it will earn from fifteen to twenty-five dollars a first performance; the repertoire companies, conflicting in no way with any of these other productions, will pay from one dollar to two dollars and a half a performance, contracting for from twenty to thirty weeks, and paying in advance; there are innumerable repertoire companies in the United States and Canada. We are constantly leasing plays to each class of manager above mentioned; if you can write a play suitable for this, our market, it will earn an income for you while you are waiting for New York recognition.

During 1926 we sold the following plays to the Walter H. Baker Publishing Co., of Boston, Mass.: these are three and four-act plays:

"CINDERELLA O'REILLY," "THE CROSS-EYED PARROT," "ALIAS BILLY NIX," "TOO MANY PARENTS," "GETTING GEORGE'S GOAT," "THE PRINCE OF HASHIM."

The one-act play, "BRIDE AND GLOOM," "THE RUNAWAY BRIDE" to the Penn Publishing Co., of Philadelphia.

Agnes Mapes, of Co-National Plays, Inc., of New York, gives any manuscript we send her immediate attention, and is at present handling three plays sent her by our office, and O.K.'d by our reading department as suitable for New York production.

Adeline Alvord, Box 95, Hollywood, California, is our moving picture representative.

Larry Johnson, of the George W. Winniett Play Co., 1402 Broadway, is the company's New York representative.

Milo Bennet, 36 W. Randolph St., is our Chicago representative.

In the face of the above facts, the statement that the HOFFMAN-MAXWELL PLAY CO. has no market simply becomes ridiculous.

Every playwright has his eye on Broadway, but, you'd like to have your plays make money for you right now; you'd like to have them produced by stock and repertoire companies throughout the country; have the feeling that you are really getting somewhere, if only in a small way, at the start, wouldn't you? Then, let us assist you; send for Maxwell's Play Technique; let us have your plays, when completed, to criticise, paying the fee, realizing you will get your money's worth, and, if your plays are suitable for our market, we will do everything in our power to "put them over."

TED and VIRGINIA MAXWELL.

### INTRODUCTORY OFFER

Maxwell's Play Technique.....Price \$1.00  
Criticising, reading and advisory fee two dollars and a half  
for a one-act play, and five dollars for those of two acts or  
more.

**Hoffman-Maxwell Play Co., 830 Market St., San Francisco, Cal.**

### WE MAKE GOOD—SO CAN YOU

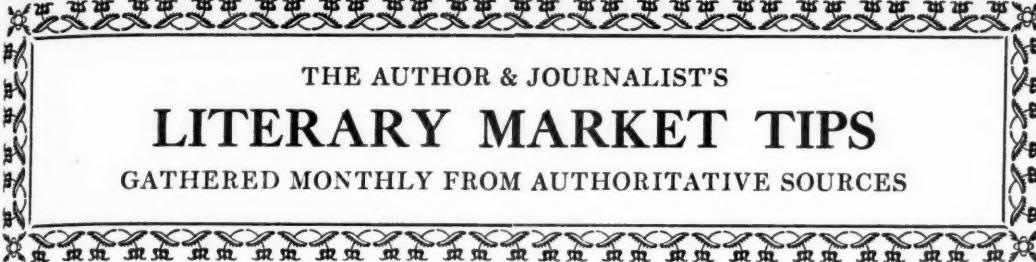
We criticise free and type for half price—30 cents per M, one carbon—first short-story sent in by each new patron. Criticism, revision, typing—specialists in all. Circular on request.

**Writers' Ideal Service**  
6338 Florence Boulevard      Omaha, Nebraska

### MANUSCRIPTS

neatly typed, correctly punctuated. 50c per thousand words. Handwritten manuscripts 75c per thousand.

**GEORGE W. DAVEY**  
276 Haven Avenue      New York City



## THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S LITERARY MARKET TIPS

GATHERED MONTHLY FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

*Clues*, 799 Broadway, New York, the most recent of the Clayton publications, announces its preferred length limits as follows: For articles on crime and detectives, 1500 words; short-stories, 1500 to 3000; novelettes, 10,000 to 12,000; serials, 40,000 to 60,000. Payment is made on acceptance, the 5th and 20th of each month, at 1½ cents a word up. All except North American serial rights are released to the author. *The Danger Trail*, of the same group, announces that its rates are now 1½ cents a word up. *Ace High* announces a 2-cent minimum, and *Cowboy Stories*, 1½ cents.

*Vanity Fair*, 18 W. Forty-fourth Street, New York, Frank Crowninshield, editor, sends the following corrected statement of its requirements: "Please note that we never use fashion or society material. Our specialty is literature and the stage. Serials or humorous articles on various topics of the day, 1700 to 2000 words, are purchased; essays, wit and comment, same lengths; no short-stories or serials. Verse, preferably short and light, from 10 to 30 lines, is desired. We use chiefly material that could be classed as 'sophisticated,' i. e., having to do with art, the theater, sports, and literature. Payment is made on acceptance at from 5 to 10 cents a word."

*Top-Notch Magazine*, 79 Seventh Avenue, is now edited by George Briggs Jenkins, who succeeds Arthur E. Scott. Mr. Jenkins writes: "There will be no change in policy; the magazine will try to print fiction that will entertain, amuse, and interest everyone. It uses short-stories of 2500 to 8000 words, novelettes of 10,000 to 15,000 words, novels of 25,000 to 40,000 words, serials of 40,000 to 70,000 words, verse up to 32 lines. Especially desired are out-of-door, adventure, action, short Western and Royal Northwest Mounted Police stories; but no locale is barred. Stories must be clean, interesting, and alive. No sex, grimly realistic, introspective, horror, tiresome, or pointless stories wanted. Payment is at varying rates, from 1 cent up. Authors should mark on manuscripts what rights they wish to sell. Novels from 25,000 to 40,000 words are most needed at present."

*Woman's Home Companion*, 250 Park Avenue, New York, advises that the following corrections should be made in the statement of its needs in the Handy Market List: Short-story limits are from 2500 to 10,000 words. No verse is desired. Gertrude B. Lane is editor, Maxwell Aley, fiction editor.

*The Forum*, 247 Park Avenue, New York, pays for material on acceptance, not on publication as previously listed in THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST, according to a letter from John Bakeless, managing editor.

*True Marriage Stories*, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, Elizabeth Sharp, editor, makes the following report of its requirements: "Stories of emotional type, present problems of modern marriage, with characters of middle and lower classes, dramatic but not melodramatic situations. Stories based on plot suspense, stories of so-called 'society' people by writers who have never seen a butler, or stories wherein coincidence solves a problem, will be found unavailable. A few articles on problems of present-day marriage, of 2500 to 3500 words, can be used. Short-stories should contain from 2500 to 7500 words, serials from 15,000 to 30,000 words. Payment is on acceptance at from 1 to 2 cents a word, and rights other than first American serial will be released if the writer requests it."

"*I Confess*," 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, pays on acceptance, instead of on publication as rated in the Handy Market List, according to Elizabeth Sharp, editor, who states further: "We desire tensely emotional and compactly written confessions, told in the first person, presenting some problem or situation between a man and a girl that sounds true to everyday life; drama but no melodrama. Not desired is the fictional type of story turned into a first-person story, or stories with a viewpoint counter to the current moral code. Preferred length limits: short-stories, 2500 to 5000 words; serials, 10,000 to 30,000. Rates are from 1 to 2 cents a word, and other than first American serial rights are released if writer specifically requests it."

*True Heart Tales*, 45 W. Forty-fifth Street, New York, is a new monthly magazine edited by Aaron Wyn, who asks for first-person stories preferably written from the point of view of a young woman. Strong love interest and dramatic action are essential. Short-stories of about 3000 words and two-part stories of 7000 words will be used, and payment is promised on acceptance at from 1 to 2 cents a word.

*The Gammadion*, Birmingham, Ala., has consolidated with the *Southern Magazine*, 412 N. Twenty-first Street, Birmingham, and the new editor and publisher is Phil Painter.

## THE SERVICE BUREAU FOR WRITERS

Franklin, Ohio

—(\*JAMES KNAPP REEVE—AGNES M. REEVE, editors)—offers competent editorial assistance in the criticism, revision, and marketing of manuscripts. Home study for Student Writers. Book MSS. a specialty, correctly typed and prepared for publication. Manuscripts marketed. Explanatory leaflets. Correspondence Invited.

### Also Text-Books for Writers:

Modern Photoplay Writing—Its Crafts-	
manship (Dimick)	\$3.00
1001 places to Sell Manuscripts	
(Reeve)	2.50
Art of Inventing Characters (Polti)	2.50
The Writer's Book	2.50
Juvenile Story Writing (Robinson)	2.10
Technique of Fiction Writing (Dowst)	1.75
36 Dramatic Situations (Polti)	1.50
Figurative Language (Reibold)	1.50
Plotting the Short Story (Chunn)	1.00
Rhymes & Meters (Winslow)	.75
How to Write a Short Story (Quirk)	.65
The Way Into Print	.50

### Catalogue 30 others

(\*Founder of The Editor)

### Writers' Service Bureau

6 Alexander Building, Franklin, Ohio

MANUSCRIPTS neatly and accurately typed by an experienced Authors' typist; 50c per 1000 words.

Helen E. Street

123 N. 10th St., Olean, N. Y.

### COLORADO TYPIST

Distinctive typing; dictionary service; one carbon. Prose: copying from typed copy, 50c per 1000 words; from handwritten, 75c per 1000 words. Poems: 1c per line.

AGNES C. HOLM

600-a E. & C. Bldg. Denver, Colo.

### WELL-KNOWN AUTHOR

offers collaboration with new writers on stories, photoplays, etc., on profit-sharing basis; also Criticism and Sales Service.

LAURENCE D'ORSAY

P. O. Box 2602, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF

### PERSONALIZED LITERARY SERVICE

rendered authors by experienced agent who is thoroughly conversant with current requirements.

MARGUERITE E. HARPER  
341 Madison Avenue, N. Y.

## Finish this Plot— Win a Prize! \$40.00 in Prizes

**PLOT:** A young poet deeply loves a woman who, being of conservative training and timid nature, cares more for him than for his work. He writes a beautiful but daring poem that will offend conservatives, but enhance his reputation with the few. She tells him if he holds it from publication, she will accept him, and gives him to a certain day to agree to do so. On that very day, the poem is accepted by a leading magazine, his first important acceptance. (Finish the plot on the basis of the situation and psychology of the woman, as revealed.)

**PRIZES:** It will be easy for you to finish this plot. Try it. 1st Prize, \$25.00; 2nd, \$10.00; 3rd, \$5.00. Send only one solution, not over 100 words. Don't copy plot. Write name, age (18 or over), address and number of words plainly. Contest closes March 10th. No plots returned. A few minutes' use of your imagination may win you the \$25.00 cash prize. Anyway, it's good practice. Show this plot to your friends.



Dr. Burton

Try. Show

**FREE:** All contestants will receive FREE particulars and booklet of Dr. Richard Burton's Correspondence Course in Short-Story Writing, special low rate and Profit-Sharing Plan. Personal service on your lessons. If you don't care to compete, ask anyway for free book. Short-Story Writing is really the short-cut to recognition in Photo-play Writing. Increase your income. Learn Short-Story Writing.

**LAIRD EXTENSION INSTITUTE**  
407 Laird Bldg. Minneapolis, Minn.

### GOOD TYPING PAYS!

Minor corrections, extra first and last page if desired, prompt return. 75c per thousand words with carbon copy. Poetry: 3c per line.

**AUTHORS' TYPING SERVICE**  
1106 Riverdale Street  
West Springfield, Mass.

### FAMOUS AUTHORS

are among my clients. I will give your manuscripts just as careful and expert attention as I give them. Typing rates:

POETRY—2c a line.

FICTION—75c per 1000 words (including minor corrections of spelling and punctuation). \$1.00 per 1000 words (corrected, criticized and revised). Further information given upon request.

MISS N. WALKER  
724 Hearst Bldg. San Francisco, Calif.

### WRITERS, ATTENTION!

We do not guarantee to make a story salable, but we CAN make it as marketable as plot and treatment will allow.

Our revision and criticism department is under the personal attention of an experienced writer and critic, and our typing department will dress your MSS. to the taste of the most discriminating editor.

### RATES

Criticism \$1.00 per 1000 words

Typing, one carbon copy, 75c per 1000 words with minor errors corrected.

If we get your business, we will keep your business.

**Authors' Bureau of Criticism**  
Box 402 Pittsburgh, Kansas

*Woman's World*, 107 S. Clinton Street, Chicago, Walter W. Manning, editor, reports its requirements at this time as short-stories of adventure and mystery theme, with strong, romantic action, from 2500 to 4500 words; adventure and mystery serials of 40,000 to 50,000 words, and short verse. Payment is made upon acceptance at good rates.

*Radio News*, 53 Park Place, New York, uses radio fiction of from 2000 to 4000 words, in addition to its feature articles, writes Hugo Gernsback, editor. Preferred length-limits for radio articles of general interest are 1500 to 2500 words. Radio jokes, skits and anecdotes are used. Payment is on publication at 2 cents a word.

*The Chicago Tribune Syndicate*, 247 Park Avenue, New York, announces that it buys more serials than any other publication except *The Saturday Evening Post*. Material usually is obtained by arrangement with well-known authors.

*Black Mask*, 45 W. Forty-fifth Street, New York, is now edited by Joseph T. Shaw, who writes: "We are anxious to see well-written stories of crime detection filled with clean, virile action, and plausible, but without the gruesome or horrible, the ultra weird, or supernatural; also Westerns and adventures with some element of our main theme. Acceptable lengths range between 4000 and 20,000 words. Payment is made on acceptance at 1 cent a word."

*Broadcasting Magazine*, 1182 Broadway, New York, announces itself as a new radio and home magazine "in the market for technical radio articles, instructive articles on the home and home life, thumb-nail biographies, and inspirational articles. Can use anything of general interest from 100 to 2500 words. When possible, photographs should accompany articles. Minimum rate, 1 cent a word, paid on acceptance."

*Scientific American*, 24 W. Fortieth Street, New York, is edited by Orson D. Munn, who states that payment is made on acceptance for scientific or technical articles popularly presented. Articles are paid for at 2 cents a word up, department items at 1 cent.

*The Eagle Magazine*, South Bend, Ind., "desires human-interest feature articles of not more than 1800 words," writes Frank E. Hering, managing editor. "We buy no fiction or poetry and no essays. We have been swamped by verse and fiction and articles running to 4000 and 5000 words. Just to read and return these manuscripts requires a great deal of time, and I wish to stop such contributions at the source, saving time for the contributor and the magazine."

*The Lion*, official magazine of the International Association of Lions Clubs, Melvin Jones, editor, and John D. Hill, managing editor, uses a small amount of fiction, editorials, a few business-inspirational articles, and news of club activities.

John L. Hayden, supreme secretary of the Ancient, Mystic Order of Samaritans, 66 Parker Building, Schenectady, N. Y., writes: "I am connected with interests which are planning a fraternal magazine along inspirational lines, and we will want matter of that character. Material should be along the line of fraternalism, of an inspirational, character-building type. The magazine will be devoted to Odd Fellowship and fraternalism in general. Payment will be at  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent a word up, according to character of story, and should not be over 3000 words in length at this time."

*Children, The Magazine for Parents*, 353 Fourth Avenue, New York, Mrs. Harold A. Littledale, managing editor, writes: "We are planning a new department in this magazine which will probably be called, 'Why Not Try This?' For this department we would like to have short contributions telling ways to simplify the care of children and explaining little experiments which parents have found were short-cuts in bringing up their children. In other words, this department ought to be a place where parents can exchange trade secrets. Contributions should not be more than 300 words in length. One dollar will be paid for each."

*Ranch Romances*, a Clayton publication, 799 Broadway, New York, is now published twice monthly instead of monthly, and offers an increased market for fiction within its field. Clean Western love stories of 3000 to 7000 words, novellas of 25,000 to 30,000 words, and serials of 40,000 to 60,000 words are desired. Very short interesting sketches and articles about the West are used as fillers. Payment is at from 1 to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cents a word.

*Your Home* will be the title of the Macfadden publication, 1926 Broadway, New York, heretofore known as *Own Your Own Home*, starting with the March issue. M. G. Kains, editor, suggests: "Before submitting articles for our examination, send a list of topics with brief outline, stating whether or not good photos can be supplied. We can use occasional homey or humorous verse. No fiction, editorials, short miscellany, jokes, skits, or anecdotes are desired. Payment is made on publication at 2 cents a word for edited copy. The change of name is designed to broaden the appeal of the magazine."

*The New South*, 664 Provident Building, Chattanooga, Tenn., is a new magazine in the market for articles up to 3000 words on subjects of interest to the South, short-stories up to 3000 words, and short serials. Paul Severance is editor, and 1 cent a word up is announced as the rate of payment for material.

*North-West Stories*, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, specifies that there must be a woman or kindred sentimental interest in its fiction.

# THE S. T. C. NEWS

A Page of Comment and Gossip About the Simplified Training Course and Fiction Writing Topics in General

VOL. IV, No. 2

FEBRUARY, 1927

EDITED BY DAVID RAFFELOCK

## INVESTIGATED

### "Inevitable Exception" to General Run of Story Schools Is Found Worthy

Short-story schools again come under the microscope for minute examination—and this time quite intelligently by N. Bryllion Fagin, writing in *The Haldeman-Julius Monthly* under the title, "Schools of Short-Story Writing."

Always granting "the inevitable exception," Mr. Fagin points out that most courses, whether given by leading colleges and universities or by unrecognized correspondence schools, are prettily well standardized, abounding in "scientific" advice and "psychologic" discussion. And he points out that the average college course in short-story writing is particularly bad.

Mr. Fagin, who is himself an instructor in short-story writing and has written a book on fiction-writing, points out that there are some schools which do such extensive and expansive advertising that it should be obvious that a large amount of the tuition fee must go to pay overhead expenses. On the other hand certain "bureaus" offer "courses" for as low as \$2.50, which can be no more than intricate text-books, which instead of making the short-story seem an easy form, make it appear as a complex process, to master which mysterious "secrets" indeed are necessary!

What the writer of the article has to say about the exceptional teacher and honest critic is equally interesting. He says the real instructor knows that he can stimulate and encourage good work; that the guidance and criticism he can offer is "of greater importance than all the dogmas, rules, formulas, rubrics, 'don'ts' and 'do's' contained in the text-books and syllabi on the subject."

Because the Simplified Training Course is based upon **actual training** in which the student is put through a long period of professional training, testing and developing his ability from every angle, the S. T. C. has won a high place among training courses of all kinds that are sincere and efficient. The Simplified Training Course is divided into but twenty-nine lessons, yet it presents one hundred and nine assignments. Thus the student is enabled really to express and reveal himself, so that his personal instructor, who criticizes constructively all of his work, can truly guide and stimulate him.

"The critic would certainly be able to criticize more freely if his seat—or his copy of a book—had been paid for. But perhaps critics criticize freely enough already."—*The Londoner*, in *The Bookman*.

24

## A Few Words of Gossip With the Editor

No one who teaches short-story writing has yet employed the very novel argument that everyone should try to become an author because he who writes is seldom bored. The S. T. C. lays no claim to being the originator of this idea, although the suggested application of it hinted above possesses originality. The real inventor of the notion is the man who writes "Point of View" each month in *The Bookman*. Here's what he says:

For one thing, being a writer relieves the tedium of existence. It gives man a secret, a utilitarian interest in circumstances which otherwise bore him to distraction. An intolerable hour of waiting for the Milwaukee express is transformed into an epoch of speculation about the old lady on the next bench, if only the man waiting is in search of future copy. A writer can attend weddings, funerals, tea parties, church services, lodge meetings, convinced that if nothing better turns up he can at least get material for a new novel or sonnet. He will probably write neither, but none the less he has had the pleasure that comes from a purpose in his heart.

### Helps for the Editor

An editor of a literary publication tells of an amusing though somewhat bothersome experience. His magazine has been the bait for an outfit under the high-sounding title of "Producers' League," which evidently caters to the most uninformed would-be writers in the hamlets and villages. The editor receives quite a large number of manuscripts through the fact that his magazine has several times been listed in the "league's" Bulletin, purporting to give "exclusive" market tips.

On one occasion his publication was listed as wanting true love stories; again as wanting articles dealing with everyday matters; later as purchasing adventure stories. The climax came when the editor began to receive MSS. from "league" members offering him "at his regular rate" poems copied from text-books and collections of verse, as the Bulletin had stated he would buy original and reprinted material!

Now the editor is able to "spot" all league contributions at a glance. Generally they are written in longhand, frequently on both sides of the paper; return postage is never inclosed; and the inevitable accompanying letter is mostly concerned about amount and promptness of payment.

## RIGID DISCIPLINE

### Guidance of S. T. C. Praised—Definitely Smooths Way to Salability

The following letter from a student of the Simplified Training Course is interesting to all writers, we believe, and hence it is quoted in full:

Dear Mr. Raffelock.

The enclosed assignments, 15-22, have proved to be by far the most difficult and most interesting of those yet completed. I do not choose to be as enthusiastic nor as panegyric as some of my fellow students, but I am none the less appreciative of the merits of this course. I was about to say of the discipline of the course, for I find that its chief, though by no means its sole merit, is the rigid discipline it demands. In fact, it was the need of just such discipline which prompted me to take the course, so it is very gratifying to find the S. T. C. coming up to those expectations.

Just a word about writing, if I may. The most discouraging feature of breaking into the writing business is the very large number of persons striving to do just that thing. I find myself not envying the successful writers, but the noisy nondescripts (in which class I certainly belong) who bang away at editorial doors, who take training courses, who sit up long hours pounding out drivel, who clutter up the market places with unsalable manuscripts, who, in general, make life a nuisance for editors and themselves alike.

I am reminded of an article, an autobiographical sketch by the late Charles E. Van Loan, entitled, "The Roulette Wheel of Literature." He was a Bob Davis find. In the sketch he gives the impression that getting in is a matter of luck.

A third point is the persistent insistence from all quarters that editors everywhere are looking for material, for new writers; the market is constantly widening, the future shows an endless trend of development toward greater and richer fields for writers of all classes.

Putting these three points together makes me glad that I am pricked by the "urge" and I hurl a challenge to all those gaudy tyros who claim to "take the business seriously." Frankly, I can't take it seriously, unless to live is to be serious, for writing is to be living in lovely and fascinating situations. Which all more or less justifies my belief that I need the discipline of such a course as the S. T. C.

Sincerely yours,  
R. D. A., Chicago, Ill.

"Literary activity should be acclaimed more heartily as a therapeutic measure. To be sure, music hath its charms and matrimony its good points, but writing as a means of making life bearable and interesting to deranged and dissatisfied men and women is not to be despised."—*Point of View*, in *The Bookman*.

*Garden and Home Builder*, Garden City, N. Y., is overstocked on long stuff, reports Leonard Barron, editor, but pictures are wanted. Short gardening experiences also can be used.

*Poultry Tribune*, Mount Morris, Ill., devoted to articles on experiences in poultry raising, pays on publication instead of on acceptance, as previously reported.

*Laughter*, 584 Drexel Building, Philadelphia, pays at  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent a word instead of 1 cent a word as listed in the Handy Market List, payment being made once monthly (presumably about the time of publication), according to Wm. H. Kofoed, editor. For this publication, as well as *Paris Nights*, at the same address, verse is paid for at 15 cents a line, jokes at 50 cents each, paragraphs at 35 cents each. Other than first American serial rights are released to the author. *Laughter* desires humorous skits, 150 to 500 words, humorous short-stories with a sex slant of 2500 words, humorous verse of 4 to 24 lines. *Paris Nights* emphasizes the sex element in light-hearted short-stories of 1000 to 3000 words, verse of 4 to 20 lines, and articles on the gayer side of Parisian life, theaters, cafes, studios, etc., 1000 to 3000 words. A Parisian background is essential. Vulgar, objectionable material is not desired, the editor states.

*Munsey's Magazine*, 280 Broadway, New York, is in the market for all types of fiction except juvenile. Short-stories, novelettes, and novels of not more than 50,000 words are used, but no serials. Poems not more than 40 lines long will be considered. Payment is made on acceptance at rates usually from 1 to 4 cents a word. "We are willing to buy first American serial rights only," writes R. H. Titherington, editor. William MacMahon is managing editor.

*World Traveler*, 247 Park Avenue, New York, is now edited by Elbert Severance, who writes: "We desire travel articles of about 2500 words—personal experiences with plenty of action, the 'how' type of article, the sort that would be helpful to other travelers. It is useless to send us the usual cut-and-dried descriptive travel article. Good, sharp photographs are essential. They should have human interest and should show people as they live and as one would really see them 'au naturel.' Payment is made on acceptance, usually at from \$25 to \$35 per article."

Freeman W. Hubbard, of the Hubbard publications, 248 W. Forty-ninth Street, New York, writes concerning his group: "*Cartoons Magazine* is sometimes called *Cartoons & Collegian Fun*, and sometimes *Cartoons & Movies Magazine*, but it is the same publication. It rarely buys material from outsiders. *New Sensations Magazine* was discontinued over a year ago, but contributors are still sending mail to it. *The American Art Student and Commercial Artist* has just been enlarged."

*The Nomad* is the new name adopted by *Journeys Beautiful* with the January number. The address remains 150 Lafayette Street, New York. Wirt W. Barnitz, editor, writes: "In addition to travel articles, we shall run adventure stories, at least such as might go well in a travel magazine. Of course, we shall lean much more to travel articles than to adventure material. We prefer first-person narratives of from 1500 to 2500 words. While description is, of course, the necessary element in any travel article, we don't want it overdone. What we want more than anything else is a human document, a manuscript which gives an insight into the manners and customs of the people through the human vein. An article is much more likely to be accepted if accompanied by good photographs. When possible, the photographs should combine both the scenic and human-interest elements." The magazine is rated as paying from 1 to 2 cents a word on acceptance.



### Prize Contests

*The American Arbitration Crusade* offers the following prizes for articles, sermons, slogans, cartoons and public demonstrations urging the prevention of war through arbitration: \$100 for the best letter, editorial or article appearing before July 4, 1927, in any publication having at least 5000 circulation; \$100 for the best cartoon; \$100 for the best slogan; \$100 for the best public demonstration or concerted endeavor for obligatory arbitration; \$100 for the best sermon preached before July 4, 1927. The idea is to induce our government to outlaw war by negotiating treaties between the United States and every other nation, providing for obligatory arbitration or adjudication of all disputes that may arise between them. Competitors must send in proof of their entries to be received not later than 5 p. m. on July 4, 1927, addressed to American Arbitration Crusade, 114 East 31st Street, New York, N. Y.

*California Prune Producers*, Contest Headquarters, 716 Matson Building, San Francisco, announce that they will award fifty-eight prizes, ranging from \$250 to \$25, for the best letters from housewives on "Why and How I Serve Prunes." Seventeen prizes, from \$75 to \$25, will be given teachers, dieticians, and physicians for the best letters on "Why Prunes Should Be in the Ideal Diet." School girls are offered seventeen prizes, from \$75 to \$25, for the best letters on "Why I Eat Prunes." Seventeen similar prizes will be awarded to chefs for the best letters on "How I Serve Prunes On the Menu." Thirty-two prizes ranging from \$100 to \$25, will be awarded grocers and their salesmen for the best letters on "How to Sell Prunes." Entries must not exceed two hundred words, should bear sender's name and address, and must specify class entered. They must be mailed before midnight, March 17, 1927. Winners will be announced on or about May 5, 1927.

*The Woodrow Wilson Foundation*, 17 E. Forty-second Street, New York, announces two awards of \$25,000 each, in a contest open to citizens of the United States between the ages of 20 and 35 years, for the two best essays of 2500 words on "What Woodrow Wilson Means to Me." One prize will be awarded to a man and the other to a woman. The announcement states: "Each article intended for these awards must seek to appraise the ideals, standards, and principles of Woodrow Wilson according to the personal standpoint of the writer. Since the purpose is solely to induce young people to study and understand the ideals and principles of Woodrow Wilson it should be perfectly obvious that these awards neither call for articles of fulsome praise nor analytical criticism. No mere biographical sketch of Mr. Wilson or review of his life or acts will be eligible. No article must rest on a political basis or be colored by partisanship. Particularly should it be borne in mind that Mr. Wilson's ideals far transcended any of the plans he himself carried through. Hence no article is eligible which confines itself to a review of his efforts to create an association of nations or seeks to pass judgment upon the existing League of Nations. The article should be devoted to an exposition of Mr. Wilson's precepts and principles, as he himself set them forth in his own written and spoken words. An article may be submitted by an individual or jointly by a group or organization either existent or specially formed, provided the age limit of members is strictly observed. Articles must be typewritten on one side of the paper. They will not be judged for their literary style, but rather for the ideas contained. It is suggested that the style of writing shall be natural to the writer and assume an easy, readable, and informal character. Only one article may be submitted by any one contestant. No article must bear the name of the author, nor must anything be contained on manuscript or envelope to give identity to the author. A plain, sealed envelope attached to the manuscript must contain the full name and address of the contestant and an accompanying affidavit from father, mother, legal guardian, minister, employer, or notary public, that the contestant's age is not below 20 or above 35 years. A woman contestant should indicate whether she is single or married. The article must be strictly original. No lengthy quotation must be included. No manuscript will be returned, and no correspondence regarding submitted manuscripts can be answered. All rights of whatsoever nature, such as publication rights, shall be vested in the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, which shall have given to it by the act of submission by the contestant the full right to permanent possession of the article submitted. No rights can be reserved. If, thirty days after the awards are made, publication of any article is desired, the right to do so must be obtained from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation,

which will use its discretion in granting such permission. (Contestants should note this exceptionally stringent condition.) In the remote contingency that in the judgment of the Jury of Award, no one or two articles submitted can be fairly and conscientiously considered worthy of the awards, the right is reserved to withhold either or both of the awards entirely. All articles should be addressed to the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award, 17 E. Forty-second Street, New York City, and must be received on or before October 1, 1927. The Jury of Award (to be appointed by the trustees of the Foundation) will reach its decision in time for a public presentation of the two awards in December, 1927.

*The Youth's Companion*, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, in order to encourage young writers and to discover new ones, is sponsoring a Junior Fiction contest, as part of its 100th anniversary program. Boy and girl authors between the ages of fifteen and twenty are eligible to enter, and for the best short-story, written in English, \$500 will be awarded. The second and third awards are \$200 and \$100, respectively. The contest closes April 15. The judges are William Allen White, editor and author; Elsie Singmaster, novelist and short-story writer, and John Clair Minot, literary editor of the *Boston Herald*. The editors state that this is not really a contest for amateurs. It is a contest for boys and girls who intend to be professional writers, if they are not professionals already. An interesting additional feature of the contest is that, beginning with the January 21st issue, one of the competing stories will be published in each issue, along with the other fiction in the magazine, until the contest closes in April. These stories will be paid for upon acceptance, and will remain eligible to win one of the three awards. Stories must be from 1500 to 4000 words; must be typewritten on one side of the paper (which must be white) and with a space between the lines. Each story must be certified as original by the parent, teacher, college instructor, minister, or family physician of the author; and the full name and address of the certifier must be given. No letter shall be enclosed with the manuscript; but the manuscript must bear the author's name and address on the upper right-hand corner, and must be signed by the author, in ink, at the foot of the last page. Return postage stamps should accompany each manuscript. Manuscripts bound in decorative binders of any kind, or hand illuminated or illustrated in any way, will be automatically disqualified. All manuscripts are to be mailed on or before April 15, 1927, to the Secretary, Junior Fiction Contest, *The Youth's Companion*, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. *The Youth's Companion* will retain all rights to manuscripts which are successful. This applies both to the winners of the three awards and to all others which are purchased.

*The Farm Journal*, Philadelphia, offers monthly prizes for best titles for its cover pictures.

such per-  
exception-  
e contingen-  
of Award  
be fairly  
y of the  
old either  
l articles  
v Wilson  
nd Street,  
on or be-  
ward (to  
foundation)  
public pre-  
er, 1927.

on Street,  
writers and  
nior Fic-  
sary pro-  
ages of  
and for  
\$500 will  
ards are  
st closes  
n White,  
elist and  
literary  
ors state  
ours. It  
d to be  
essentials  
e of the  
21st is  
published  
in the  
These  
and will  
awards.  
must be  
h must  
. Each  
parent,  
ly phys-  
address  
shall be  
uscript  
on the  
med by  
page.  
each  
bind-  
strated  
All  
April  
contest.  
-Bos-  
retain  
essful.  
three  
1.  
nly  
thly

*The Drama League of America*, in co-operation with *Longmans, Green & Co.*, announces a series of four national playwriting contests. The first is for a one-act play on an American historical theme in which only college students may compete; the second is for a one-act play in which anyone may compete, and in which the theme must be unusual in conception and treatment; third is for a play of any length or type based on incidents of either the Old or New Testament, in which anyone may compete; fourth is for a full-length play of any number of acts or scenes on any theme treated in any manner, in which anyone may compete. The plays are to be sent to state judges not later than June 1st, 1927, who will select those to be sent on to the national judges for final selection. The winning plays will be produced—the full-length play by Brock Pemberton of New York, the Biblical play by the Pilgrim Players of Chicago, and the one-act plays by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts of New York. All will be published by *Longmans, Green & Co.* Nathaniel Edward Reed is general supervisor of the contest. For further details address state headquarters or the Drama League of America, 59 E. Van Buren Street, Chicago, or *Longmans, Green & Co.*, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York.

*Rays From the Rose Cross*, Oceanside, Calif., organ of the Rosicrucian Fellowship, offers five prizes for manuscripts to be submitted before May 1, 1927. The prizes are, first \$25, second \$15, third \$10, fourth and fifth \$5 each. A year's subscription will be paid for acceptable stories that do not win prizes. Manuscripts should contain not less than 2500 words and should be headed "Manuscript Competition." More than one may be submitted by a competitor. Types of material acceptable for contest: 1—Mystical stories and interesting personal experiences bringing out some phase of occult teachings. 2—Philosophical articles on mysticism, occultism, philosophy, and religion, either theoretical or practical. 3—Astrological articles, both esoteric and exoteric. Practical applications of the science of astrology. 4—Health articles, bringing out interesting scientific and occult facts about the human body; also articles of a practical nature on the gaining and retaining of health. The editors reserve the right to make slight modifications in articles and stories to bring them within the requirements of their philosophy.

*Yale University Press*, New Haven, Conn., specifies that manuscripts for its series, The Yale Series of Younger Poets, must be in the hands of the editors by May 1st for the first competition, or November 1st for the second competition, each year. The series is open to writers under thirty years of age who have not previously published a volume of verse. No prize is awarded, but the successful poet is assured publication of his volume on a 10 per cent royalty basis.

*The Penn Publishing Company*, 925 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, offers a first prize of \$1000, second of \$500, third of \$250, and three prizes of \$50 each for three-act plays suitable for amateur production. The contest closes March 1, 1927.

*People's Popular Monthly*, 801 Second Street, Des Moines, Ia., announces that \$500 will be paid to the reader who submits the best title for a serial by Ruth Collins starting in the January issue. The closing date is April 25, 1927.

*The Forum*, 247 Park Avenue, New York, writes: "We conduct several prize contests. There is a standing offer of any book up to the value of \$5 for the best new words in the American language. We also have made a feature of definition contests, which are announced from month to month in the magazine itself." Readers have previously been informed of the prize novel contest which is being carried on by *The Forum* in conjunction with Frederick A. Stokes & Company, publishers.

*Battle Creek Dog Food Company*, 82 E. State Street, Battle Creek, Mich., announces that it is giving \$100 each month for the six best letters on results obtained from the regular use of prepared dog food. The chances of success are better if letter is accompanied by photographs.

*The American Art Student and Commercial Artist*, 248 W. Forty-ninth Street, New York, offers a first prize of \$50, second of \$25, and third of \$10, with twenty prizes of subscriptions, for "the best illustrations of ideas that can be used in a Life Cartoon Comedy film. That is to say, the best gags, situations, or clever effects that can be animated for cartoon movies. Or, if you want to try your skill with something entirely original, think up a new character for a cartoon film. \$50 will be paid for each new character which is eventually accepted by the producers and actually used in the production of animated cartoons. Contest closes at 5 p. m. April 1, 1927. Either drawings or ideas may be submitted, but no scenarios. Contestants may submit as many ideas or drawings as desired. None will be returned, but it is stated that those which do not win prizes will not be published or used." An arrangement for the conduct of this contest has been made with Life Cartoons Comedies Studios and Educational Film Exchange, Inc.

*Life* offers \$50 prizes for ideas for Life Cartoons Comedies. Full instructions and a sample scenario will be sent to those who ask for them. Address Scenario Editor, *Life*, 598 Madison Avenue, New York.

*The Household Magazine*, Topeka, Kan., which temporarily suspended its department, "A Bit o' Humor," reinstates it with the January number and announces: "If you have a contribution for the *Household* joke column, send it in. For every joke published we will pay 50 cents.

# Results That Pay

*"Learning by experience" is a slow, wasteful method. You may eventually succeed in writing in this way—but can you afford to wait until "eventually"?*

## *A*N ENROLLMENT IN THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S SIMPLIFIED TRAINING COURSE

is a sound investment because you will immediately begin to realize upon it. The results obtained by S. T. C. students, THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S reputation for service and reliability, and our special guarantee plan give full assurance of the utmost dependability of the S. T. C.

An S. T. C. enrollment will bring results through four important services.

### WHY THE S. T. C. IS A SOUND INVESTMENT

#### I

The S. T. C. simplifies the whole matter of technique, revealing with blue-print clearness the essential structure of the short-story.

#### II

The S. T. C. helps you to secure plot material, to develop your plots and plot outlines, and to write your complete story.

#### III

The S. T. C. gives you practical, concrete, personal and constructive criticisms on all your work, consisting of over 100 assignments.

#### IV

The S. T. C. helps you in every way to secure the desired professional quality in your work and it helps you in the actual marketing of your stories.

### SEND FOR "THE WAY PAST THE EDITOR"

In every way, the Simplified Training Course saves your time and energy and helps you to make the most of your ability. In these respects your investment in an S. T. C. enrollment pays big and immediate dividends.

We have prepared an interesting booklet, "The Way Past the Editor," which contains much of interest to all writers and which gives complete information about the S. T. C. Upon request, we should be glad to send you a copy without any obligation to you. Just tear off, sign and mail the coupon below.

#### THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST.

S. T. C. Dept.,  
1839 Champa Street, Denver, Colo.

Please send me, without obligation on my part, your free booklet, "The Way Past the Editor," and full information about the Simplified Training Course in Short-Story Writing.



Name.....

Address.....

2/27